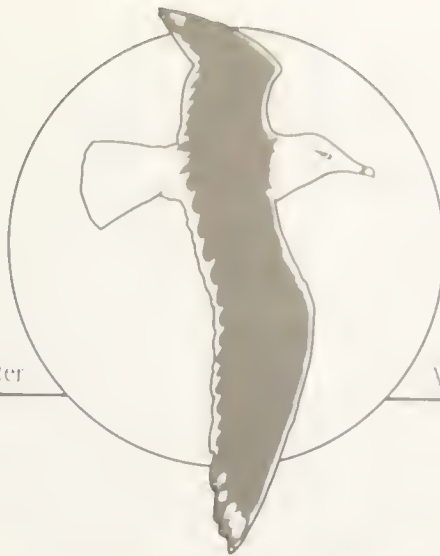


The Gull

Golden Gate Audubon Society Newsletter



Volume 30, No. 1 January 1999

JUL 24 2000

National Audubon Thinks We're Great

The Golden Gate Audubon Society is a chapter of the National Audubon Society (NAS). While GGAS is a nonprofit corporation completely independent of National Audubon in terms of governance, we share conservation goals and work closely together. Furthermore, NAS gives GGAS a share of the membership dues it receives from all of its members within GGAS's geographic boundaries (and those NAS members automatically become GGAS members).

In return for giving us part of each member's dues, NAS asks that we meet certain criteria necessary to make us an effective Audubon chapter. Each year we, in turn, report to NAS on the con-

servation and education projects we have undertaken.

We are proud of our work and are even more proud to have NAS recognize our efforts. This year NAS wrote us a very glowing acceptance letter, if we do say so ourselves, responding to our yearly report. Here is a short quote from the NAS letter.

"The Golden Gate Audubon Society is doing a tremendous job. The chapter is to be commended on its outstanding conservation work. The list of conservation activities that the chapter is engaged in is truly exemplary. From wetlands protection, to habitat restoration, to public education and outreach, once again, Golden Gate Audubon has proven itself a real environmental leader. Your support for the San Francisco Bay refuge system is a model for the rest of the nation. The chapter should feel particularly proud of its role in the successful campaign to acquire Bair Island.

Your environmental education committee continues to do a wonderful job. The "family field trips" sounds like a wonderful program. We also applaud the chapter for its interesting monthly meetings, a fine newsletter, and a good job at its membership recruitment and publicity."

From Jill Shirley for the National Audubon Society.

Thanks to Jill for that very complimentary letter, and we promise to keep up the good work.



PHOTO BY JOHN GIBBONS

GGAS' symbol, the Western Gull.



Field Trips Calendar

GAS field trips are conducted by experienced birders who wish to share their knowledge and love of birds with others. All trips are free of charge (except for entrance fees that may be charged by regional, state, or national parks) and are open to everyone, regardless of membership in the National Audubon Society or Golden Gate chapter.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 3 PALO ALTO BAYLANDS.

Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the duck pond. See *December Gull* for details. Leader: Dan Murphy (415) 564-0074. (*)

SUNDAY, JANUARY 4 STRYBING ARBORETUM.

Meet at 8 a.m. at the front gate of the Arboretum (9th Ave. and Lincoln Way). See *December Gull* for details. Leader: Allan Ridley (415) 566-3241.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 4 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT WRAP-UP!

Meet at Merrie Way above the Cliff House at 8:00 a.m. See *December Gull* for details. Leader: Alan Hopkins. (415) 664-0983. (*)

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14 MINI-TRIP TO ARROWHEAD MARSH.

Meet at 9:30 a.m. at the marsh. Take Hwy 880 (Nimitz) to the Hegenberger Rd. exit. Drive west to Doolittle Drive and turn right. Go a short distance and turn right again onto Swan Way. Turn left after a block and follow the sign

to the marsh. All welcome. Leaders: Anna Wilcox (510) 351-9301 and Jean-Marie-Spoelman.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 17 UPPER SAN LEANDRO RESERVOIR, MORAGA.

Meet at 8:00 a.m. in the Valle Vista Staging Area for a one-half day trip. Take Hwy. 24 to Orinda and exit on Moraga Hwy. Continue approximately 4 miles to Canyon Road. Turn right at the traffic signal and continue 1.2 miles to the Valle Vista Staging area on the left. See *December Gull* for other details. Leader: Bob Lewis (510) 845-5001. (*)

SATURDAY, JANUARY 24, 1997 SANDHILL CRANES!

See *December Gull* for details. This trip will be by reservation only, and the number of cars will be limited. Call leader, Harry Fuller, to reserve a spot and for meeting time and location. (415) 668-8229. (*)

SUNDAY, JANUARY 25 LAKE MERRITT.

Meet at 9:00 a.m. at Grand Ave. and El Embarcadero by the Greek Colonade in Oakland. This is an excellent opportunity to observe wintering ducks and grebes at close range and to study their field identification. This trip is especially recommended for beginners and is wheelchair accessible. Bring binoculars, scope, and field guide if you have them. Trip ends at noon. Rain cancels. Leader: Joan Zawaski (415) 433-1700 days; (510) 530-2427 eve. (*)

SATURDAY, JANUARY 31 ARROWHEAD MARSH AND MORE

(Alameda County). Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the marsh. Take Hwy 880 (Nimitz) to the Hegenberger Rd. exit. Drive west to Doolittle Drive and turn right. Go a short distance and turn right again onto Swan Way. Turn left after a block and follow the sign to the marsh (at the end of the road). This half-day trip will begin with ducks, shorebirds and even open country species (such as Western Meadowlark) at Arrowhead Marsh, after which we will caravan to Laney Channel if the Barrow's Goldeneye are there, or go to some other nearby location depending on what Rusty's pre-trip scouting turns up. Leader: Rusty Scalf (510) 595-8519.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 1 STRYBING ARBORETUM.

Meet at 8 a.m. at the front gate of the Arboretum (9th Ave. and Lincoln Way) for this regular 1st Sunday of the month half-day trip. The Strybing Arboretum is a delightful section of Golden Gate Park, with several "micro-habitats" attracting an array of resident, migrant, and vagrant birds. Beginners and all others welcome. Leader: Allan Ridley (415) 566-3241.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 11 MINI-TRIP TO COYOTE HILLS REGIONAL PARK.

Meet at 9:30 a.m. in the parking lot by the Visitors' Center at the end of the road. From the East Bay take I-880 south to Newark and turn right at Rt.

Field Trip Reports

Las Gallinas Magic

Mew Gulls were riding the sewage treatment aerator like a merry-go-round as we arrived at the Las Gallinas sewage pond parking lot. A quick diversion to the pond by the nearby golf course turned up a Sora, and a bright male Common Yellowthroat dashed through the reeds. Returning to the main ponds, we watched tight groups of Northern Shovelers circling in the water, feeding, while a lone male Wood Duck rested in the shadows. While checking out Savannah Sparrows on a fence line, we were surprised to see a tail-bobbing Palm Warbler circle our group, perhaps hoping for migrating instructions. Later on, we watched an aerial ballet between a Say's Phoebe and large moth end in disaster for the latter. Twenty-one people, 55 species, and one good time. Bob Lewis, October 26, 1997.

This and That

Palm Warblers were the vagrants of this fall's field trip season. In addition to the Las Gallinas bird, individuals were found on the Abbott's Lagoon trip (Lina Jane Prairie, 9-28-97) and the Point Reyes Bird Blitz (Leon Abrams and Cathy Purchis, 10-18-97). The lucky birders on Leon and Cathy's all-day Point Reyes trip were treated to 109 species, the highlight of which was a gorgeous male Prothonotary Warbler found earlier in the day by Jean-Marie Spoelman. Although both lament the overall decline in the number of birds, Jean-Marie and Anna Wilcox continue with their usual great "mini-trips." Their Emeryville Shoreline trip (10-8-97) had 8 participants and 100s of shorebirds and gulls on a bad weather day, and their Berkeley Aquatic Park trip (11-12-97), 23 participants on a beautiful day that featured 13 Redheads, 7 Barrow's Goldeneyes, 1 Hooded Merganser, and 1 Red-necked Grebe! Allan Ridley's first Sunday of the month (usually) Strybing Arboretum trips (10-5-97 and 11-2-97) have been a great success, with many birders (23 and 40) enjoying this easily accessed jewel of an area in Golden Gate Park. At Hayward Shoreline (Cam Wolff, 9-27-97), the time of year provided an opportunity for 11 birders to compare eclipse and non-eclipse plumaged ducks. Snowy Plovers were not seen on the Hayward Shoreline trip (they nest there), but 18 were seen on Alan Hopkins' 10-11-97 Cliff House/Ocean Beach trip. Good birding. }

84/Dumbarton Bridge exit. Continue west and exit on Paseo Padre Pkwy. Turn right and continue north one mile to Patterson Ranch Rd. and follow the signs to Coyote Hills. We will be looking for 5 species of teal and other wintering waterfowl. Bring lunch and a scope if you have one. Leaders: Anna Wilcox (510) 351-9301 & Jean-Marie Spoelman. (\$) (*)

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 14 PANOCHIE VALLEY.

Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the intersection of Hwy. 25 and J-1 in Paicines, 12.5 miles south of Hollister. From there we will drive east to I-5 south of Los Banos. This trip traverses raptor habitat which usually produces Golden Eagles, Merlins, and Prairie Falcons, plus Mountain Bluebirds, Phainopeplas, and Vesper Sparrows. Considering the distance involved in this trip, be sure to fill your gas tank before leaving Hollister, and carpool from the Bay Area if possible. Bring lunch and warm clothes. Heavy rain cancels. Leader: Chris Carpenter (510) 569-9281 day, (510) 547-2201 eve.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 21 MCLAREN PARK, CANDLESTICK POINT, SAN FRANCISCO

Meet at 8:30 a.m. at McLaren Park at the intersection of Cambridge and John F. Shelley Drive. To reach McLaren, exit Hwy 101 at Silver Ave.. Go west on Silver to Cambridge. We should see Bewick's Wren, Western Meadowlark, and other "common" birds we don't often

see in the City. We will then caravan to Candlestick Point Recreation Area where there will be ducks, shorebirds, and possibly Peregrine Falcons. Leader: Alan Hopkins (415) 664-0983. (*)

Trips marked with a (\$) go to parks or other sites which require an entrance fee. Carpooling arrangements will be attempted for trips marked with a (*). See below.

Problems, etc.: If you need a ride or can take a passenger, if you need information and have difficulty reaching a field trip leader, if you have suggestions for trips, or if you are interested in leading a trip, call Lillian Fujii (510) 256-4167, Field Trips Committee Chair.



Start your year right! Plan a bird-watch outing a month. At first I dreamed big: Costa Rica in January, Tobago in February, etc. Then I got real and down-sized to trips within the Bay Area with a few longer jaunts. For the more adventuresome, Aileen Lotz has written *"Birding Around the Year - When to Find Birds in North America"* (1989 Wiley Nature Editions, John Wiley & Sons, Inc.).

There are few times in the year in California when things are so slow as to be boring bird-wise. Think of the variety of habitats: ocean, bay, saltwater marsh, stream, oak woodland, lake, redwood forest, grassland and medium-sized mountains. Within a few hours you can also experience both alpine and desert terrains. So, grab your binoculars and field guide, fasten your seatbelts, and here we go!

January, February, and March

Drive north on Interstate 5 to Sacramento Wildlife Preserve. There are enough Tundra Swans, geese of all persuasions, Sandhill Cranes, along with many ducks and a large number of raptors to attract you. Even if it's not what it used to be in the 19th century, it's still awesome. SWP has an auto route as well as a walking trail and a photo blind. Grey Lodge is nearby off Highway 99 and has its own charms. The Delta region (Staten Island, Grizzly Island, etc.) is closer, with

similar birds, but not in the huge numbers as the above. You can also see shorebirds, hawks, and Burrowing Owls. Look out for tule fog in the valley. If you prefer a longer trip, try the Klamath Basin on the Oregon border.

Hayward Shoreline Regional Park at the east end of the San Mateo Bridge (510-881-6751) is a fabulous place to scan waterways as well as the bay for all sorts of birds. Also good are Doolittle Pond near the Oakland Airport and the Alameda Estuary. Other nifty spots are Pescadero Marsh in Half Moon Bay, Elkhorn Slough at Moss Landing, and the Benicia and Martinez shorelines.

Drive down to Merced County for grassland species in March, then continue on to the desert (Joshua Tree, Borrego Springs, Death Valley). Interesting species abound among the wild flowers. Head back north to Ojai (condors maybe?) and Santa Barbara. Then take 99 and feast your eyes on Chinese houses (lupine) and California poppies. Pause for meadowlarks, bluebirds, and anything else flying.

April, May, and June

Before it heats up, hit these spots for birds and wildflowers. Bouverie Audubon Preserve in Glen Ellen has guided walks - call for info (707-938-4554). Sutter Buttes is an amazing, unique place - Middle Mountain Foundation has had guided spring tours (916-343-0703). Clear Lake is off the beaten track and looks almost like the

Alps in spring. Anderson Marsh State Park at the south end of the lake has wetlands, riparian forest, and wooded uplands. Other stops could be Clear Lake State Park and Cache Creek Management Area where you could see Bald and Golden eagles, Osprey, White Pelicans, assorted egrets and herons. Coyote Hills Regional Park in Fremont (510-795-9385) has great views of courting Marsh Wrens from boardwalks. Also look for ducks and even nesting Great Horned Owls. S. F. Bay Nat'l. Wildlife Refuge in Newark has shorebirds galore and access for kayaks and canoes (510-792-0222).

April is a fine time to visit Audubon Canyon Ranch to view the spectacle of nesting herons and egrets (415-868-9244). While in the area, scan Bolinas Lagoon, then drive north on Highway 1 to Five Brooks Pond, next go anywhere in Point Reyes and along Tomales Bay. The Pinnacles, east of Soledad (take Highway 101 south to 146) has wonderful hikes with superb wildflowers and birds. Don't forget Golden Gate Park, The Presidio, and Lake Merced in San Francisco for all sorts of warblers and migrating birds passing through. In the east bay in Moraga is the staging area for Valle Vista's King Canyon Loop trail, a real gem.

May is great on Mount Diablo or along Marsh Creek at the base of the mountain (near Clayton). Tilden Park has some wonderful spots for birds. And don't forget Richardson Bay Audubon Center

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Richmond's "Birding
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Gifts and Bequests

Wendy Warrington,
The Tides Foundation

Birdathon:

Renate & Jan Smith

In honor of Robert A. Mendle's 80th birthday:

Bryan & Jean Myers,
Elizabeth Peiser, Frances Weil,
William & Roschelle Weiman

The Society welcomes gifts in general or gifts in honor of or in memory of relatives and friends. Such gifts will be used as specified by the donor or, if unspecified, at the discretion of the GGAS Board of Directors. This includes their use of general GGAS activities or for special programs of the Society. Please send your gift in the form of a check made out to Golden Gate Audubon Society, 2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G, Berkeley, CA 94702. All gifts are tax deductible. The Society is also appreciative of any bequests. Such bequests should specify as recipient the Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. All gifts, donations and bequests will be acknowledged in *The Gull*, as well as personally on behalf of the Society by the Secretary.

the Elephant Seals ño Nuevo

Friends of the Alameda Wildlife Refuge (FAWR) committee ites you and your family to our second annual visit to the o Nuevo State Game Reserve on Sunday, January 18, 1998. this trip, you will have the opportunity to view hundreds of phant seals haul out on the beach to perform the annual

pupping and

breeding rituals. You can only visit the Reserve during the height of the breeding season as part of a docent-led group.

Specially reserved tickets at \$10 each are available from FAWR volunteers for 4 docent-led tours departing at 12:30, 1:30, 1:45, and 2:00 p.m. **January 18th.** A portion of the ticket price goes to FAWR in support of educational and interpretive activities to be developed at the new Alameda National Wildlife Refuge.

For information and reservations, call Corinne Stefanick (510/769-8951).

is famous, and rightly so. The trick is to hit it when the fog isn't hanging low—here you can look DOWN on raptors! It's just plain exhilarating with incomparable views—plus experienced spotters to help you identify birds. I like to drive down to the Marine Mammal Center and then bird the beach the same day. Other good fall spots are Bodega Bay, Oakland's Lake Merritt, and Palo

Who We Are, and What We've Accomplished

Your Golden Gate Audubon Society is one of the most active Audubon Chapters, but we have a feeling that many of you don't know exactly what we do and who we are. So this year we're trying something new. We are going to introduce you to some of the people who are getting things done in our chapter, and tell you what they are doing.

GGAS For The Birder

Field Trips

The weekend has arrived, and it's time to remind ourselves that there's a natural world out there. What better way than to go on a GGAS field trip? Birding connects us to nature as almost no other recreation because it requires you to look at nature, not just walk through it. At GGAS, we often seem to emphasize our conservation activities and somehow fail to recognize the amazing work done by our volunteer Field Trips Chairperson, Lillian Fujii (with the help of her husband Steve Hayashi), and our many field trip leaders. Lillian says, "I realize that organized field trips led by experienced birders are among the most important activities we can bring to our members. I am trying to arrange more field trips to locations in San Francisco, as well as other local birding spots. I hope to do even better this year than last. After one year on the job, however, I have to say I am ever more impressed by my predecessor Russ Wilson's, 9 years as

Field Trips Committee Chair." Thanks to Russ, and now Lillian, GGAS provides one of the most extensive field trip schedules in northern California. We lead over 80 field trips every year to wonderful birding sites around the Bay, the State and the world.

Rare Bird Alert – Northern California Bird Box

Most of us don't get tired of seeing our native species but if you are looking for something new to see, the GGAS Bird Box will tell you where to go.

We had one of the first Rare Bird Alerts in the nation and one of the

best. Now it's called the Northern California Bird Box, but the idea is the same. Call the number and find out where all those rare migrant and vagrant birds are to be found in Northern California. The number is listed on the back of the *Gull* every month.

A Birding Guide for Golden Gate Park

Thanks to Vice-President Alan Hopkins and San Francisco Conservation Committee members Adena and Heather Rosmarin, GGAS is developing a birding guide for San Francisco's Golden Gate Park. We hope to circulate this guide to hotels and the Convention Center and in the park itself. We plan to make this just the first step in developing a San Francisco Birding Trail. The

benefit of all this is not just to help people have a good time seeing birds but also to impress on decision-makers the value of protecting and enhancing bird habitat because it brings in significant amounts of tourist dollars.

Programs

Terry Schmitt is our volunteer GGAS Program Chair and, thanks to her, our monthly programs have taken us all over the world. Want to know what part of the world to go to next to see new birds, or what plants to grow in your garden to attract more of our native birds. It's all there in our monthly programs, held the third Thursday of the month, September through May.

Web Page

How do you find out about our field trips? The best way is to get our newsletter, the *Gull*, which you are reading this very minute. All our field trips and programs are listed in the *Gull* every month.

Thanks to volunteer Mark Eaton, the *Gull* can be found every month on our web site at www.Audubon.org/chapter/CA/GGAS. On the web site, you can find not only our field trip and program listings but also action alerts and *Gull* articles.

The Gull

We're proud of the *Gull*. Thanks to volunteer editor John Gibbons and graphics designer Vicki Valentine, the quality of our

By Executive Director Arthur Feinstein

newsletter has never been better. Unfortunately, many of you have seen it too late in the month to appreciate it.

What's happening? In October the computer crashed. In November we had a confusion between us and our printer. Both times it resulted in the *Gull* getting to the post office a week late. But the *Gull* was at the post office by October 8 and November 6. Many of you did not get the *Gull* until the third week of the month, two weeks or more after we delivered it to the post office. The *Gull* does go out as third class mail, but even so, two weeks is a long time for mail delivery. We do urge you to call your local post office branch and complain about the late delivery. We have to do better, and we will, but so must the U.S. Mail.

Publicity

For years GGAS hoped to find someone who would help us let the world know about our activities, and happily she found us. Rebecca Freed writes, "As the Publicity Chair, I help generate interest (and attendance, I hope) for GGAS activities (especially the program meetings) by sending press releases to local media outlets. This brings people who don't receive the *Gull* into contact with GGAS and acquaints them with our mission. I bring to this task 10 years as an editor of national magazines and a desire to see GGAS' activism recognized in our area."

GGAS for the Birds

While providing our members with the best in birding that we can, we never forget that our most important mission is to preserve those very creatures we cherish and the habitats on which they depend. GGAS spends a lot of its efforts on the conservation of habitats for our wild critters. Here are a few examples of our efforts over the last year.

Alameda National Wildlife Refuge

GGAS's Leora Feency is a fighter. Her concern for all creatures, wild and human, is clear in all her actions.

So when the closure of the Alameda Naval Air Station was announced and the fate of the endangered California Least Tern, the endangered California Brown Pelican, and the largest West Coast breeding colony of Caspian Terns were all put at risk, Leora figuratively rolled up her sleeves and went to work. The result – an Alameda National Wildlife Refuge.

Last October we had to ask you to help defend the new Alameda Refuge from becoming a limited-use airport. Hundreds of you responded and wrote letters to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Your letters saved the day! The Service finally wrote a letter to Alameda saying that a private airport was not compatible with the Refuge and that it presented a real liability to the area because it is well known that birds and airplanes do not mix.

Against tremendous opposition, Leora and GGAS helped establish a 525-acre Refuge. Another 375 acres of Bay water were also included in the Refuge boundaries to protect the Alameda breakwater on which over 1200 Brown Pelicans were seen roosting this year.

But we're not done yet. In close association with Audubon-California (the National Audubon State Office), GGAS hopes to establish an Audubon Center in Alameda that will function as the interpretive center for the Refuge and as the nature education center for Alameda and West Oakland. This is an ambitious program, but GGAS is determined to make it work.

What Else Have We Done?

This year the City of Oakland considered a proposal to have a World's Fair site created on the Oakland Estuary, in part at a site called the Clinton Basin, which they proposed to fill in and make solid land. The proposal also included a linkage with Lake Merritt that would have been created by expanding the trail that follows the channel from Lake Merritt to the Estuary.

Well, wouldn't you know ... Along the channel is the only remaining tidal marsh in that part of Oakland, and it turns out that Barrow's Goldeneye (which are rare in the Bay) really like the Lake Merritt channel and Clinton Basin. If the project had gone through as planned, we could

Continued on next page

A GGAS Annual Report

Continued from page 7

have said good-bye to those birds.

The day was saved, however, thanks to GGAS volunteer John Bowers, who attended meetings and wrote letters explaining to the planners and the Port of Oakland the problem with the project. We were thrilled with how receptive the planners were, and the project was apparently redesigned to avoid most of the adverse impacts. Finally, the entire project evidently fell through and will not be implemented. But if it had been, the Goldeneye would have survived thanks to John and Paul.

Arrowhead Marsh

As you have been reading in previous editions of the *Gull*, our 71-acre wetland restoration project at Arrowhead Marsh, located in the Martin Luther King Shoreline Regional Park in San Leandro Bay, is proceeding well, and we hope to breach the levee this month and bring back Clapper Rail breeding habitat. This was all made possible by the very generous support given to GGAS by you, our members. That support allowed us to successfully take the Port of Oakland to court three different times. As a result, the Port agreed to stop filling wetlands it had started to fill and to pay \$2.5 million to restore 71 acres of wetlands to replace that amount it had already destroyed. That restoration is the Arrowhead Marsh Project, and we look forward to its being a great success.

Treasure Island

Led by San Francisco Conservation Committee member Ruth Gravanis, GGAS is working to have the redevelopment of Treasure Island include the creation of wetlands. Thanks to a grant from the Rose Foundation, GGAS along with the Public Trust Group and ARC Ecology hired a consultant to write a study on the feasibility of constructing wetlands on Treasure Island, in particular wetlands that would help cleanse Treasure Island's stormwater run-off (stormwater run-off is often full of petroleum products from cars

and toxic heavy metals).

That study and our presentation to the Treasure Island Task Force elicited cautious support for the concept from them. We hope to turn that cautious support into full-fledged enthusiasm over the next year.

Mono Lake

In November 1997, a film was shown on KQED that portrayed the long struggle that led to the saving of Mono Lake. GGAS played an important role in that story. In 1982, GGAS raised \$42,000 for the Mono Lake campaign. This money was critical for the lawsuit and other advocacy efforts that were essential in the Mono Lake struggle. This incredible effort took place under the leadership of GGAS members Afton Crooks, Joyce Davis, Helen Green and Nicki Spillane. Many other GGAS volunteers took part in birdathons and bike-a-thons

to raise money for the Mono Lake Committee.

We look forward to similar efforts in making our Alameda Audubon Center effort a similar success.

GGAS for All

We lead field trips, and we fight to preserve wildlife habitat. But for the conservation movement to truly succeed, we must instill in everyone, not just GGAS members, the desire to preserve our natural world. Sadly, in this modern urbanized world, some kids grow up in the Bay Area without ever seeing the Bay or ever being in a forest.

To overcome this handicap and to give them the chance to understand the natural world, to even realize that it exists, requires us to reach out to our Bay Area schools and children. We were thrilled when Louise Harm, GGAS Education Chair, came to us and said she wanted to help us reach out to our neighbors. Here's what Louise has to say:

Education

"I have a B.A. in Biology, and for ten years I have worked with children, first as a camp counselor and, more recently, as an elementary school teacher. I find that children, especially at a young age, will enthusiastically absorb any information you give them about the world they are a part of. By taking a few minutes of my time to show a child something as special as a bird that routinely visits my feeder, or by

turning over a rock in a stream to see what creatures live underneath, I find that I am quickly able to tap into a child's exploratory nature and hook them into appreciating the incredible world around them.

"I and the other members of my small Education Committee are now leading short birding trips specifically geared toward families with children of any age. The walks focus on local birds and bird behavior, primarily to give the children an appreciation for what they are seeing and to teach observation skills."

"We are also writing a Kid's Page for the Gull as a means to reach out to the children in the chapter and get them involved. We hope that parents and kids will read the page together and use it as a stimulus for finding the birds that live in their backyards."

"As our committee grows we hope to add other programs to our list. We will keep you posted."

The Board

There's lots more to tell about GGAS; our Armchair Activist program that generates over 130 letters on conservation issues every month; our breeding bird atlas effort in Alameda County; our yearly Christmas Bird Counts. But for now, enough's enough. We hope you noticed in this little summary of our activities that nearly everyone is a volunteer. GGAS exists because of volunteer efforts and for the past 1 1/2 years, President Debey Zito and

the Board of GGAS have been responsible for its achievements.

The Board is aided by an office staffed by Executive Director Arthur

Feinstein and one part-time office assistant, Caroline Kim. Even in the office, however, it is volunteers that make it work. Dick Bachenheimer and Ken Cardwell, our office volunteers, keep our operation going. If you are looking for a rewarding way to take on some volunteer effort, please consider GGAS.

The Pitch

We would like to talk to you about our effort to establish an

Audubon Center in Alameda, which would function as an interpretive nature center to the new Alameda National Wildlife Refuge. This is one of the most exciting ideas in GGAS history. Alameda is surrounded by millions of people in an urban setting who are more and more estranged from our natural world. If we can't reach out to these folks and show them the wonders of nature and the need to preserve it, the future of that natural world is greatly in doubt.

To make this Audubon Center a reality will take a great deal of time and effort and money. Although GGAS thrives because of its wonderful volunteers, to establish an Audubon Center will require hiring new staff. This will be a full-time operation, developing an interpretive center with displays and possibly a nature store, organizing and leading

docent tours of the Refuge, developing and implementing classroom programs, etc.

To undertake all this is a major commitment, which GGAS has made. GGAS has dedicated \$20,000 a year over the next 5 years for the development of this center. Audubon-California has agreed to match this funding by helping us seek out matching foundation grants.

But this commitment on the part of GGAS will mean that we need to raise a significant amount of money to create this Center and still keep all of our other activities in gear. So please consider giving us an especially generous donation this year.

Last year we established two Circles of GGAS friends, the California Clapper Rail Circle for those who donate \$100 or more and the California Least Tern Circle for those who donate over \$200 or more.

Clapper Rail circle donors receive a GGAS lapel pin in recognition of their support and the California Least Tern Circle receives the lapel pin and a field trip to a unique location led by one of our top birders. Please consider joining one of our GGAS circles. We hope you will use the envelope found in this Gull and help GGAS's efforts to preserve our natural world into the 21st century. Thanks! }

What's a Nuttall?

by Harry Fuller

Nuttall's Woodpecker is a common bird in some inland forests of California. The woodpecker was never seen alive by Thomas Nuttall for whom it was named. Yet it is the only bird species whose popular name recalls Nuttall, perhaps the most productive field biologist in the United States before 1850.

Nuttall was born and raised in Yorkshire, England, but emigrated to the United States in 1808. He was 22 years old, already an avid, self-trained botanist. He worked for a printer in Philadelphia, and spent his spare time botanizing and learning the natural history of his new homeland. He learned from Benjamin Smith Barton who'd just published the first textbook on North American plants. Nuttall's first field trips in America were to collect specimens he sold to Barton.

During three decades in America, Nuttall would travel tens of thousands of miles, by foot, horse, riverboat, and sailing ship. He was tireless, fearless and driven. During his collecting trips he touched on every state east of the Mississippi River while many were still largely unsettled territories. He also explored in the very wild west. He made a trip up the Arkansas River in 1819, aided only by a fur trapper and he made two trips with fur traders up the Missouri, the first in 1811, less than a decade after Lewis & Clark's expedition.

Young Henry Breckenridge wrote about their trip up the Missouri with fur traders in 1811:

"There is in company a gentleman...Mr. Nuttall, engaged in [botany]...to which he appears singularly devoted, and which seem to engross every thought, to the total disregard of his own personal safety, and sometimes to the inconvenience of the party.... To the ignorant Canadian boatmen, who are unable to appreciate the science, he affords a subject of merriment; "le fon" [the fool] is the name by which he is commonly known...."

It is perhaps apochryphal that on one trip in dangerous Indian territory, the fur traders checked Nuttall's rifle and found the barrel clogged with dirt. He allegedly used it to dig up plants! In 1822 the self-trained Nuttall became professor of natural science at Harvard and director of the college's botanical garden. It was there that a colleague urged him to publish a handbook of American birds. At the time the only American bird books that existed were those illustrated by Alexander Wilson and J. J. Audubon, both too large and too expensive for most Americans, neither designed for field use. Nuttall responded, publishing America's first field manual on birds in two volumes, land birds in 1831, and water birds in 1834. Some of the information in Nuttall's water birds volume came from Audubon who shared his notes after a trip to Labrador. Nuttall would soon reciprocate after he'd seen Oregon and California. His manual was continually republished in updated form until the 1890s, making Nuttall the Peterson of the 19th Century.

The chance to go to the Pacific Coast in 1854 with a group of fur-traders led Nuttall to resign from Harvard at the age of 48. Despite dangers, disease and near-starvation, Nuttall went to Oregon, making him the first scientist to traverse North America by land and the first to visit California, still a Mexican territory. He even made two brief visits to the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii).

Nuttall was certainly one of the great field biologists of his day. Hundreds of American plants were first collected and described for science by Nuttall or his correspondents. Dozens bear his name in latinized form, including the Pacific dogwood (*Cornus nuttallii*). He found many plants that remained mysterious to science for decades, some not relocated until the 20th Century. But his observations and collecting were broad. He is responsible for collecting dozens of new molluscs and insects from the Atlantic to Hawaii, and he brought to science scores of new reptiles, mammals and birds. Many of these non-botanical discoveries were published by others after Nuttall shared his specimens and field notes. Audubon was a frequent recipient of Nuttall's generosity. After Nuttall's Pacific Coast trip, Audubon wrote:

"Mr. Nuttall generously gave me of his ornithological treasures all that was new, and inscribed in my journal the observations which he had made respecting the habits and distribution of all the new and rare species which were unknown to me....while it proves his zeal for the furtherance of science, it man-

Volunteer Workday

ifests the generosity of his noble nature."

Some of the "new" birds collected by Nuttall were: Black Oystercatcher, Western Gull, Townsend's Solitaire, Green-tailed Towhee, Harris's Sparrow, Common Poorwill (*Phalaenoptilus nuttalli*), Anna's Hummingbird, Tricolored Blackbird and Yellow-Billed Magpie (*Pica nuttalli*). Audubon named both the Poorwill and the Magpie for Nuttall. The Yellow-billed Magpie was first seen by Nuttall during a brief stop at Monterey, then one was killed and collected at Santa Barbara. We now know it as the only bird never confirmed outside of California.

Another great contribution Nuttall made throughout his life: discovering other talented scientists. His assistant on the 1834 expedition was a 24-year old doctor and talented ornithologist, John Kirk Townsend. Townsend himself brought a number of new birds to the attention of science during his extended stay on the West Coast. He was the first to send east the skins of some warblers unique to the West: Orange-Crowned, Townsend's, Macgillivray's, Hermit, Black-Throated Gray and "Audubon's". Townsend, in turn, kept a detailed journal of the expedition and published a fine book on the trip.

We are fortunate that the first scientist's eyes to see California were those of Thomas Nuttall. His energetic, hard-pounding little namesake is an appropriate reminder. }

The GGAS East Bay Conservation Committee is organizing a volunteer workday at Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline. Wetlands are being restored and created at this East Bay Regional Park (see the October 1997 issue of the *Gull*), and all are invited to contribute to this wonderful pro-

ject. In conjunction with the Park District we will spend an afternoon removing exotic cord grass. This alien plant competes with our native vegetation, and is less inviting to the Clapper Rail and our shorebirds than are our native wetland plants. Please join us for an afternoon of rewarding work.

Date: Saturday, January 24, 1998
(If there is heavy rain in the afternoon, the workday will be postponed to Saturday, February 7, 1998)

Time: 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM

Location: Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline

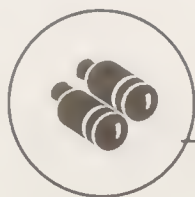
Directions: From Highway 880 exit at Hegenberger Road and head towards the Oakland Airport. Turn right onto Doolittle Drive. At the first traffic light turn right onto Swan Way. The first left turn is the park entrance road. We will meet at the end of this road.

Other Information:

- ◆ A park ranger will be present to train us and provide assistance.
- ◆ Dress in layers.
- ◆ Wear old clothes that you don't mind getting dirty. (You will get muddy!)
- ◆ We will be working when the tide is low, so we should not be standing in water.
- ◆ The Park District will provide vinyl gloves, but you might want to bring your own to ensure a comfortable fit.
- ◆ Bring binoculars if you would like to do some birding.
- ◆ The workday will be postponed to Saturday, February 7, 1998 if there is heavy rain in the afternoon of January 24. For more information call (510) 525-7108.

Registration:

If you would like to join us, please telephone the GGAS Office at (510) 845-2222 by Wednesday, January 21. If you leave a message, please tell us your phone number in case we need to contact you. }



October 23 to November 23

Weeks of offshore flow and warm weather preceded the beginning of the real rainy season. Then the Bay Area was treated to the refreshing sight of billowing white clouds against a brilliant blue sky, alternating with winds and heavy rain. Newly moistened soil provided foraging opportunities for ground feeders such as sparrows and towhees. During this period, good numbers of both regular and uncommon fall migrants appeared in Northern California.

Loons to Ducks

Nominated for bird-of-the-month was a breeding-plumaged **Yellow-billed Loon** that graced Monterey Bay, MTY, again this year, beginning on Nov. 1 (AD). By Nov. 9, it was beginning to molt into basic plumage (per MPRBA, DLSh). This bird may be the same individual that wintered there the past 4 years. This species is a rare winter visitor to California, with most previous records, like this one, from Monterey Bay. There were at least 9 reports of Red-necked Grebes from MTY to MNO counties, with the highest count of 7 individuals at Bodega, SON, on Nov. 11 (RI). Pelagic observations recorded 20 Black-footed Albatross, with 15 on Nov. 2 on a Cordell Banks/Bodega Canyon trip (DN). There was also a total of 6 Laysan Albatross found on 4 offshore trips (SR, DN, AD). Northern Fulmars were abundant during the period, with a high count of 582 on the Oct. 25

Cordell Banks trip (DLSh) observations of storm pet were reported, a Fork-tail Storm-Petrel seen west of Farallones Oct. 30 and a V Storm-Petrel in a similar Nov.9 (SR).

On the other hand, the many shearwaters, with 1 counts of 1500 Black-ven Pacifica Oct. 30, SM (JM), as 680 Buller's and 885 Pied Shearwaters at Cordell Oct. 25 (DLSh). The rarer 1 footed Shearwaters were 3 occasions, 4 Oct. 25 at C Banks (DLSh), 2 off the Fa Oct. 30 (SR), and another Cordell Banks/Bodega Ca Nov. 2 (DN). On Nov.15, tl Blue Heron was still at M MRN, where it has lingered at least the end of July (LI

According to the Dec.1' of *Birder's World*, there are over 42 million breeding the U.S., a whopping 31% over the average since the Fish & Wildlife Survey be over 40 years ago (although species, such as the scaup declined inexplicably). A nent talk given by Wendel at the November GGAS meeting reminded us, however, that habitat destruction, such as draining of marshlands for agricultural use in the Klamath Basin, is still an extremely serious concern for waterfowl populations in many regions. This month's duck reports yielded some encouraging finds. Eleven Eurasian Wigeons were spread over 5 localities in BUT, MRN, SCL, and SF counties. Two Harlequin Ducks were at

Co. Oct. 24 (KH) and another at Ocean Beach, SF, Nov. 15 (BK).

Pacific Golden Plovers totaled 20 for the period, with sightings in MRN, MTY, SM, and Yolo counties, but no American Golden Plovers were reported. There were good numbers of Mountain Plovers, with 15 seen Oct. 25 in Fremont, ALA (SG), 1 each in PLA and MRN on Oct. 26 and 28 (MB, EG), and another 15

in Yolo Co. Nov. 3 (SG). The most interesting sandpiper reports were of the Rock Sandpiper, a rare but regular Northern California visitor, which arrived in 4 locations. The first appeared at Glass Beach, MEN, Oct. 30-31 (DT), another at MacKerricher St. Pk., MEN, Nov. 3-13, where it was conveniently roosting on the rocks (DT), a third on W. Cliff Drive, SCZ, Nov. 14-23, the first SCZ country record in a decade (SD, JC, per MPRBA). A fourth individual was seen Nov. 16-22 at Bodega, SON (DA, BBu, RL). A Pectoral Sandpiper was found Oct. 25 at Abbott's Lagoon, PRNS, MRN (AID). There were many reports of both Pomarine and Parasitic jaegers from offshore locations. South Polar Skuas were seen off the Farallones, on Monterey Bay, and at the Cordell Banks.

As reported in last month's observations, an adult **Lesser Black-backed Gull**, a European species and an extremely rare fall and winter visitant, was first observed on Oct. 11 near the Alviso Marina, SCL, (MR, DLSh, DSi, MF), where it stayed until at least Oct. 27. This is the third year for that visitor in the same location. Then, on Oct. 31, a probable immature (first-winter or second-basic plumaged?) **Lesser Black-backed Gull** appeared at L. Cunningham, San Jose, SCL, where it was seen up to Nov. 20. (SR and MOB). The first Black-legged Kittiwake of the season was seen on the Oct. 25 Cordell Banks trip (DLSh). One or two Elegant Terns, scarce north of

Marin, were reported at Bodega Bay, SON, Oct. 22 (DB). The 13 or more Black Skimmers mentioned in the last 2 observation columns remained at Charleston Slough, SCL, until at least Nov. 14 (JM). Three Xantus' Murrelets were seen west of the Farallones Oct. 30 (SR), and a single Tufted Puffin was found at Cordell Banks Oct. 25 (DLSh).

Hummingbirds to Swallows

A male Costa's Hummingbird appeared at a private feeder in Pacific Grove, MTY, Nov. 15 (per MPRBA). Montane species of woodpeckers invaded lower elevations in good numbers, with the highest concentrations at San Benito Mt., SBT. Single Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were seen in 5 locations: at Phipps Ranch, SM, Oct. 25 (AE), on San Benito Mt., Oct. 29-30 (DLSh), at Ed Levin Park, SCL, Nov. 1-22 (MM, DS), on La Canada R, SCL, Nov. 9 (MR), and at Bobber Lane Audubon Preserve, SUT, Nov. 22 (JS). Williamson's Sapsuckers were found on San Benito Mt., 4 on Oct. 20-23 (DLSh), and another on Nov. 8 (MMi). Individual Red-naped Sapsuckers were found on San Benito Mt., Oct. 29-30 and at the UC Santa Cruz Campus, SCZ, Nov. 20 (JC). A most amazing sight must have been the more than 20 Red-breasted Sapsuckers on San Benito Mt, Oct. 20-25 (DLSh).

Tropical Kingbirds were reported from 5 locations. An Eastern Phoebe, seen an average

Warbler sightings

<i>Indigo Warbler</i>			
Nov. 12	Farallones		PP
<i>Magnolia Warbler</i>			
Oct. 25	UC SC Arboretum	SM	JM
Nov. 2	Guadalupe R.	San Jose	SC1MM
Nov. 18	AMSP	MTY	per MPRBA
<i>Black-throated Blue Warbler</i>			
Oct. 23	Princeton	SM	JM
Oct. 23	UC SC Arboretum	SM	JC
Oct. 28	Carmel R.	MTY	per MPRBA, BR
Oct. 29			
Nov. 1	Carmel R.	MTY	MM
<i>Black-throated Green Warbler</i>			
Nov. 12	Farallones		PP
<i>Prairie Warbler</i>			
Oct. 26	PRNS	MRN	RS
Nov. 21	Guadalupe R.	SCL	SR
<i>Lucy's Warbler</i>			
Nov. 22	L. Merced	SF	PM
<i>Black & White Warbler</i>			
Oct. 22	Carmel R.	MTY	per MPRBA
Oct. 23			
Nov. 4	Carmel R.	MTY	per MPRBA
Nov. 22	Great HWY	SF	PM
<i>American Redstart</i>			
Oct. 25	Fish Docks	MRN	HC
Nov. 9	Point Pinole	CC	SG
<i>Northern Waterthrush</i>			
Oct. 29	Carmel R.	MTY	per MPRBA, BR
Nov. 4	Carmel R.	MTY	per MPRBA
<i>Yellow-breasted Chat</i>			
Oct. 26	AMSP	MTY	per MPRBA
	(banded)		

of only once or twice each fall in Northern California (Small, 1994), was found again this year (its third or fourth annual visit!) in Shady Oaks Park, San Jose, SCL, on Nov. 7-8 and again Nov. 21 (MM, DS, CL). On Oct. 25, 24 late-migrating Cliff Swallows flew over Half Moon Bay, SM (AF), followed on Nov. 9 by 5 equally tardy Barn Swallows at the same location (RT).

Continued on next page



Continued from page 13

Old World Warblers to Wood Warblers

The **Dusky Warbler** mentioned in last month's column lingered at Antonelli Pond, SCZ, until Oct. 22 (BF). Another, or possibly the same individual of this "Old World" warbler species, was found in the same location on Oct. 24, after which it was not seen again (per MPRBA). An exceptionally late Swainson's Thrush was banded at BSOL on Nov. 8 (per MPRBA). The first report of Mountain Bluebirds this season was from Del Puerto Canyon Rd, STA, Nov. 17 (GF). A Brown Thrasher was seen Nov. 4 and 6 at Pfeiffer Big Sur State Pk, MTY (per MPRBA). A Sage Thrasher was found periodically at Fisherman's Wharf, MTY, from Oct. 26 to Nov. 15 (DLSh and MPRBA). (This individual was recognizable due to an eye injury.) Townsend's Solitaires were found at lower elevations during the period: one at Los Altos Hills, SCL, Nov. 4 (SR) and more than 9 on San Benito Mt., Oct. 20-23 (DLSh) and another at that location Nov. 8 (MMi). Again this month, a Red-throated Pipit made a flyby over N. Beach, PRNS, MRN, Oct. 26 (DS fide BB). Don't those birds ever land?

Wood warblers were sharply decreased compared with the last 2 months, as indicated on the chart, which does not include 8 Palm and 2 Nashville warblers. The Oct. 26 sighting of a Yellow-breasted Chat was very late for that species.

Tanagers to Grackles

A very late female-plumaged Western Tanager was found at San Geronimo, MRN, Nov. 18 (BN). A **Snow Bunting** was found at L. Talawa, DN, Nov. 10 (AB). The Indigo Bunting reported last time was still at Bodega, SON, Oct. 25 (DS). Just in time for this report was an adult male **Painted Bunting**, which was spotted Nov. 22, along Pescadero Creek, SM (AE). This exciting species is exceedingly rare in N. California (Small, 1994), and the possibility that it was an escaped bird cannot be ruled out.

Fall/winter sparrows were outstanding this year. Not only were there 5 reports of Clay-colored Sparrows from SCZ, MTY, and SM counties and 7 observations of White-throated Sparrows, one each in SE, MRN, SCL, SE, SM, SON, and SUT counties, but there were many reports of much less common fall transients. Topping the list was a **Field Sparrow** seen Nov. 6 at Modoc NWR, MOD (RL). This mid-western and eastern species is exceedingly rare in California (Small, 1994). An American Tree Sparrow, a rare but regular winter visitor, was found on the Carmel R, MTY, Oct. 28 (per MPRBA). There were 5 reports of Swamp Sparrows, another very uncommon fall transient species: at Pescadero, SM, Oct. 25 (AE); the Carmel R, MTY, Oct. 28 and Nov. 9 (per MPRBA); at Pilarcitas Ck., SM, Nov. 9 (RT); at AMSP, MTY, Nov. 12 (per MPRBA); and at Pine Gulch Ck., MRN, Nov. 15 (LL). Vesper Sparrows were sighted in

Abbreviations for Observers:

SA, Steve Abbott; DA, Dick Ashford; SB, Steve Bailey; AB, Alan Barron; MB, Mike Baumgartner; BB, Bob Brandriff; DB, Dixie Burkhardt; BBu, Betty Burridge; JC, Josiah Clark; HC, Hugh Cotter; AD, Al DeMartini; SD, Steve Drew; AE, Al Eisner; ME, Mike Feighner; GF, George Finger; BE, Brian Fitch; SG, Steve Glover; EG, Ed Greaves; SH, Steve Hampton; KH, Keith Hansen; MH, Mary Harman; AH, Alan Hopkins; BK, Beth Katz; JK, John Kemper; RL, Rick Lebadour; LL, Leslie Lieurance; CL, Calvin Lou; MM, Mike Mammoser; PM, Peter Metropulos; MMi, Mark Miller; JM, Joe Morlan; DN, Dan Nelson; BN, Bill Noble; PP, Peter Pyle; RR, Richard Redmond; BR, Bob Reiling; MR, Mike Rogers; SR, Steve Rottenborn; DS, Doug Shaw; DLSh, Debra Love Shearwater; DSi, Dan Singer; RS, Rich Stallcup; JS, John Sterling; RT, Ron Thorn; DT, Dorothy Tobkin.

Abbreviations for Counties and Others:

ALA, Alameda; AMSP, Andrew Molero State Park; BUT, Butte; BSOL, Big Sur Ornithology Lab; CC, Contra Costa; DN, Del Norte; LAS, Lassen; MEN, Mendocino; MER, Merced; MOD, Modoc; MOB, Many Observers; MPRBA, Monterey Peninsula Rare Bird Alert; MRN, Marin; MTY, Monterey; PLA, Placer; PRNS, Point Reyes National Seashore; SBT, San Benito; SCL, Santa Clara; SCZ, Santa Cruz; SF, San Francisco; SM, San Mateo; SON, Sonoma; STA, Stanislaus; SUT, Sutter.

Antioch, CC, Nov. 14 (SG) and at Peach Tree Valley, MTY, Nov. 21 (per MPRBA). A first county record of the Black-throated Sparrow occurred Nov. 9 at Woodland, Yolo (RR fide JK, SH). A Brewer's Sparrow was located Nov. 16 on Rd. 103, Yolo (SH). According to the Breeding Bird Survey, Brewer's Sparrow is one of the most consistently declining species for which records are kept (per *Bird Conservation*, Summer 1997). Still another rare transient was the Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow seen at Palo Alto Baylands, SCL, Nov. 14 (SA). Not to be outdone by the rare sparrows, 2 eastern variety "Red" Fox Sparrows were reported during this busy period.

Calcarinus sp. were also amply represented, with 7 Chestnut-colored Longspurs found in MRN and PLA counties and at least 40 Lapland Longspurs seen in MRN, SCZ, SM, and PLA counties. There was a McCown's Longspur at Brew Rd., PLA, Oct. 26-27 (MB, DS) and 2 others in the same location Nov. 22-23 (BB). Finally, a male Common Grackle, exceedingly rare in N. California, was found Nov. 14 at the Smith R. Bottoms, DN (AB).

GGAS Helps Bring Environmental Restoration and Education to San Francisco

Recently the Golden Gate Audubon Society received a request from the S.F. Recreation and Park Department to help fund a very worthy project through which two Americorps participants would work with the City's Natural Area restoration and education programs. (Americorps is President Clinton's program to help young people gain community service experience while earning a modest stipend.)

In this San Francisco program, two Americorps community coordinators will develop and lead environmental education and restoration activities with school children and community volunteers.

We have joined with the Friends of the Randall Museum in funding this program. The Friends provided \$3000 and GGAS \$2000.

One example of how this project works is taking place at Rooftop Elementary School. As part of a 10-week program to restore Glen Canyon Park, students will collect native plant seeds, propagate those seeds in the classroom, and remove exotic vegetation such as fennel and french broom to prepare the site for planting in the winter. It's a great project, and what a wonderful nature experience for those kids!

We were pleased to be able to help fund such a worthy project, and we hope to have even greater interaction with this program, but to do that will require your help.

If any of you, our members, are

interested in helping us work with this program, please give us a call. With your help we could lead some of these classes on easy birding field trips. We could take our bird slide show into the classroom, introduce children to local birdlife, and maybe spark their interest in birds.

All it takes are volunteers. So why don't you become one. Join the growing ranks of GGAS volunteers and help make this Natural Areas Program even better with enhanced GGAS participation. Give us a call at 510-845-2222.

Great Blues Have a Great Year

by John Gibbons

The Great Blue Herons' fifth season in Golden Gate Park was absolutely the most spectacular," reports Nancy DeStefanis, site coordinator of the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory Colonial Waterbird Monitoring Project in Golden Gate Park. The tree collars were obviously a success in deterring raccoons because 8 Great Blue fledged at the conclusion of this fifth season of the herons nesting at Stow Lake!

In September 1996, a dozen volunteers, organized by DeStefanis, installed 35 metal collars on 29 of the trees on the island at Stow Lake. These trees have been used as nesting sites by the herons since 1995.

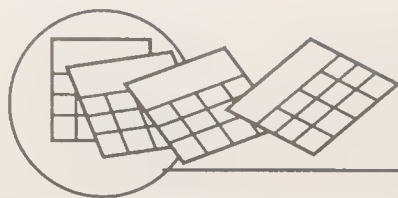
Although raccoons were seen swimming to the island many times afterwards, their attempts to climb the trees were foiled by the ample sheet metal collars.

Two pairs of herons began sitting on eggs in March of 1997. Both nests produced 4 chicks (2 is the average). More remarkably, all 8 chicks fledged and had left the area by the 4th of July! This September, the collars were

inspected and found to be in great shape after a year of repelling raccoons.

Until 1997, the Stow Lake colony of Great Blue Herons was the only colony nesting in San Francisco. However, in March of 1997, Dan Murphy discovered a new colony at Lake Merced! The nests are located in the Eucalyptus trees near the police firing range (ear plugs were found in two of the nests). This new colony will be monitored next season by DeStefanis and her hard-working Stow Lake volunteers.

Nancy DeStefanis will host and narrate the premiere of documentary filmmaker Judy Irving's new short film "Heron Island." She will also preview the upcoming season of Great Blues nesting at Stow Lake, answer questions, and conclude with the accordion rendition of the song she co-wrote, "My Blue Herons," Thursday, February 26, 1998 at 7:30 at the Josephine Randall Museum in San Francisco.



January Meeting

What's Being Done?

We often hear of the many environmental problems and dangers in the Bay Area, but hear and know too little about what is actually being done to solve them. You now have a chance to talk with one of the Bay's most ardent defenders, Michael Lozeau. He is the Executive Director and a founding member of San Francisco BayKeeper, the only on-the-water citizen monitoring organization working to reduce pollution in the San Francisco Bay and Delta.



PHOTO BY JOHN GIBBONS

Thursday, January 15

7:30 p.m.

The Josephine Randall Museum

San Francisco

He is also a member of the Technical advisory Committee for the State of California's Oil Spill Prevention and Response Office (OSPR) and the Citizens advisory Committee for the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC).

Mr. Lozeau will be talking to us about past, present, and future threats to the Bay and its wild life, and the human support systems that help fight in the Bay's defense. This is not only a great chance to meet a very interesting person but to also educate yourself on many of the conservation efforts in our area.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

As a member of National Audubon Society, you are automatically enrolled in the local chapter, Golden Gate Audubon Society. Chapter benefits include receipt of *The Gull*, access to field trips and programs, and the opportunity to volunteer. Call the office if you have any questions.

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Published each month except August by the Golden Gate Audubon Society. Special third-class postage paid in Oakland, CA.

Send address changes to office promptly. Post Office does not forward *The Gull*. Monthly meeting: second Thursday, 7:30 p.m. Joint membership, local and national, \$50 dollars per year (\$20 per year new members) includes *Audubon Magazine* and *The Gull*. Renewals should be sent directly to National Audubon office. Subscriptions to *The Gull* separately: \$10 per year, single issues \$1.

The Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. was established January 15, 1917, and became a chapter of National Audubon in 1948. *The Gull* deadline is the first of the month for the following month's issue and July 15th for the September issue.

The Gull -- ISSN 0164-971X

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DESIGN BY SLART DEPARTMENT PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER